

Message Text

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SUBJ: CURRENT MEDIA REACTION

IN EDITORIALS DEVOTED TO PRESIDENT FORD'S TRIP TO EUROPE, TWO DAILIES COMMENT AS FOLLOWS:

THE BULLETIN (CONSERVATIVE) OF JUNE 2 (EVENING), UNDER HEADING "THE MIDDLE EAST" COMMENTS:

".....

PRESIDENT FORD'S ATTEMPTS MAY ONLY HAVE A MEANING BECAUSE OF THE WEIGHT THE U.S. PRESIDENT IN PERSON CAN CARRY-BUT NO SOLUTION IS IN SIGHT. THE PROCESS OF PEACE IS BOUND TO BE LONG. PRESIDENT FORD IS NOT LIKELY TO BE TIED DOWN TO ANY DECLARATION THAT WILL BIND HIM OR FUTURE GOVERNMENTS ON WHAT ARE THE BASIC ESSENTIALS FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE, WHICH MUST REMAIN FLUID, UNTIL THERE IS CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLE EVIDENCE OF WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN.

PRESIDENT FORD'S TALKS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT WILL, AS FAR AS THE LATTER IS CONCERNED, BE STRAIGHT AND TO THE POINT - BUT IF THEY ALLOW FOR NO NEGOTIATIONS, IF CONDITIONS ARE SET A PRIORITY, FROM WHICH EGYPT WILL NOT MOVE, THE EFFORTS ARE BOUND TO FAIL. OBSERVERS NOTE THERE ARE SILVER LININGS MAY THEY REMAIN SO, IN ORDER TO ATTAIN PEACE WITH ALL THE DIFFICULTIES REMOVED, IN ORDER TO ATTAIN STABILITY IN THE ARE."

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TIMES OF MALTA (CONSERVATIVE) OF JUNE 3, UNDER HEADING "SPAIN AND NATO" COMMENTS:

"PRESIDENT GERALD FORD'S INSISTENCE THAT SPAIN SHOULD HAVE CLOSER MILITARY LINKS WITH THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION OR, FAILING THAT WITH THE UNITED STATES HERSELF, UNDERLINES AMERICAN CONCERN AT THE TURN OF EVENTS IN NEIGHBORING PORTUGAL AND PROBABLY STEMS DIRECTLY FROM THAT SITUATION. DESPITE ASSURANCES FROM THE MILITARY JUNTA THAT PORTUGAL INTENDS TO REMAIN A MEMBER OF NATO, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLECTIVE DEFENCE OF WESTERN EUROPE TO GIVE CREDENCE TO AN ADMINISTRATION WHICH HAS ALLOWED THE COMMUNISTS TO EXERCISE SUCH INFLUENCE AT A TIME WHEN THEY ARE STILL IN THE MINORITY.

MR. FORD'S POLICY APPEARS TO BE A FORM OF INSURANCE AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF PORTUGAL BECOMING COMPLETELY COMMUNIST AND TO SAFEGUARD AMERICAN BASES IN SPAIN, INCLUDING THE NUCLEAR-SUBMARINE BASE AT ROTA. PRESIDENT FORD CONSIDERS THAT SPAIN IS IMPORTANT TO THE DEFENCE OF EUROPE. THIS ASSESSMENT, UNFORTUNATELY, IS NOT SHARED BY SOME NATO PARTNERS.

ALL EUROPEAN LEADERS SHOULD BE MORE CONCERNED AT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO SPAIN AFTER THE DEATH OF GENERAL FRANCO. THERE IS A GROWING FEAR THAT SPAIN MAY FACE A SIMILAR SITUATION AS THAT PREVAILING IN PORTUGAL. PRESIDENT FORD HAS SHOWN REALISM IN THAT HE WENT TO SPAIN TO DEAL WITH THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT ON A VITAL ISSUE WHICH CONCERNS EUROPEAN DEFENCE."BIRN

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